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Letter dated 21 October 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the pleasure to present to you herewith the third report on the work of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, covering the period from 1 to 30 September 2002 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ümit **Pamir**
Ambassador
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Annex to the letter dated 21 October 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Monthly report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force for the period from 1 to 30 September 2002

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Within the framework of its mandate designated by resolution 1413 (2002), ISAF continued to conduct its activities as planned in September. The overall security circumstances in Kabul and its surrounding areas stabilized further, despite a major explosion which claimed many lives in the city on 5 September, and an attempt on the life of President Karzai in Kandahar on the same day. Consequently, ISAF has stepped up both its visibility in the city and its security precautions. However, these acts of terror did not have much impact on daily life or upset the sense of normality and calm. The local community continues to extend a warm welcome to ISAF and to support its core mission. Nevertheless, a growing number of problems persist, including the return of a huge number of refugees to Kabul, the inability of the Afghan authorities to pay its police and army personnel and the slow progress on the establishment of a national army. It is evident that a substantial flow of international aid is required to address the fundamental problems facing the country, to reject extremist ideologies and to stamp out the residual threat of terrorism.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the reporting period, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) increased its security measures, in response to a major car-bomb explosion in Kabul which claimed thirty lives on 5 September, as well as an assassination attempt on President Karzai in Kandahar on the same day. ISAF also sought to enhance the security coordination and intelligence-sharing among the relevant Afghan authorities and to address the equipment requirements of the Kabul police. Despite the many challenges and potential sources of social discontent, the situation in Kabul is relatively calm and crime rates remain low. Afghanistan might again succumb to extremist ideologies and turmoil, if the international community fails to provide the Transitional Administration of Afghanistan with substantial political and economic support, through the central government.

2. ISAF ACTIVITIES

a. General

(1) As of 30 September 2002, ISAF is composed of 4787 personnel from 20 nations.

(2) ISAF operations continued as planned in September, albeit with greater visibility and presence in the city due to a series of explosions. An average of 40 security patrols a day was conducted on a 24-hour basis and approximately two-thirds of these patrols were conducted jointly with the Afghan police. Many of these were patrols on foot. Many random check-points were established in the city to enhance the security of the public. ISAF also provided additional security during visits of foreign dignitaries to Kabul and international conferences and fairs.

(3) The ISAF commanders work closely with the senior Afghan leaders, on the basis of the full congruity between the objectives of ISAF and of the Afghan authorities. The ISAF leadership also maintains close contact with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General.

(4) The Joint Coordinating Body (JCB), set up in accordance with the Military Technical Agreement, met once during the reporting period. The meeting took place on 14 September 2002 at the offices of the National Directorate for Security and was conducted in a cooperative atmosphere, on the basis of an agenda prepared by ISAF. Minister of the Interior Mr. Taj Muhammed Wardak, COMISAF Major-General Hilmi Akın Zorlu, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. Jean Arnault, Head of the National Directorate for Security Engineer Arif Sarvari, and Commander of the Kabul Garrison Lieutenant-General Bismillah Khan attended the meeting which reviewed the general security situation in Kabul, implementation of specific proposals for enhanced security measures, including greater coordination and intelligence-sharing, and the equipment requirements of the Kabul police and the security personnel serving at the entry-exit points in the city. The next meeting of the JCB will be held on 10 October 2002, at the Ministry of the Interior.

(5) In an effort to ensure adequate Ministerial protection, ISAF has so far provided Close Protection Training for a total of 610 Afghan bodyguards. The training of an additional group of 40 Afghan bodyguards will begin soon. Furthermore, ISAF is reviewing the security arrangements of individual Ministries and preparing a report on its recommendations for enhancing them.

(6) ISAF is also endeavouring to address the equipment requirements of the Ministry of the Interior, the Kabul police and the security personnel serving at the entry-exit points in the city. Most local police stations visited by ISAF personnel have been found to be critically under-equipped. The ISAF leadership has brought the matter to the attention of the Afghan authorities and called for the acquisition of weapons, wireless sets and cars for the police force, as well as detectors to help with the search for explosives. Turkey is seeking to provide the Ministry of the Interior with weapons and ammunition, while the United Kingdom is planning to donate 100,000 US Dollars to provide special equipment for use at the entry-exit points.

(7) Turkey is providing the 1st Battalion Afghan National Guard with the follow-on training, with a view of contributing to the establishment and training of the Afghan National Army and increasing the security of the Presidential Palace. Training of the Battalion began on 21 September under Turkish instructors and will be concluded at the end of November. A team consisting of 40 members of the Battalion has been selected and given specialized protection training. This team will shortly be employed in the protection of the Presidential Palace alongside the U.S. bodyguards.

(8) ISAF has been seeking to enhance security coordination and intelligence-sharing among the relevant Afghan security entities, especially the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior, the National Directorate for Security, the local police and the Kabul garrison. A Committee for Intelligence Coordination has been established with this aim in mind. The Committee has been holding weekly meetings to ensure effective and timely exchange of intelligence.

(9) ISAF continues to enjoy the full trust and respect of the people of Kabul, who are aware of the nature of ISAF's responsibilities and appreciate its contribution to security and stability. COMISAF has issued strict orders to all ISAF personnel to treat the local citizens with courtesy at all times and to respect local customs and values. The ISAF leadership remains equidistant to all the ethnic groups which make up the people of Afghanistan.

(10) ISAF sustains a broad information campaign relating to ISAF activities, government work and the presence of the international community in Kabul, by making use of public announcements, radio and television advertisements, posters and the ISAF newspaper.

b. Security in Kabul and its surrounding areas

(1) While Kabul was relatively calm and peaceful in September, a series of explosions took place in the city. No organization claimed responsibility for the explosions. An unexploded ordnance which was apparently being transported in wheelbarrow by a Kabul citizen exploded on 1 September, killing the citizen in question.

(2) The second and major explosion occurred in the city in a busy marketplace on 5 September, killing 30 people and wounding nearly 150. Before the main explosion a small explosive device, placed on a bicycle, was set off, causing a crowd to gather. Shortly thereafter, a second and much larger car-bomb was exploded, maximizing the casualties. ISAF is organizing an appeal fund to help the families of the victims. Afghan security and intelligence chiefs blamed the Hizb-i Islami Group for the explosion.

(3) An attempt was made on the life of President Karzai in Kandahar on the same day, when a gunman fired several shots, wounding Mr. Gul Aga Shirzai, the Governor of Kandahar. The gunman and two other persons were shot dead by bodyguards.

(4) Consequently, ISAF introduced tougher security measures, in close coordination with the Afghan security authorities. Patrolling and joint check-point activities with local forces were visibly increased. Greater use was made of armoured vehicles. A quick reaction force kept at a high state of alert. Force protection measures were heightened. However, ISAF was careful not to inflict wartime conditions on Kabul. Tensions were eased shortly afterwards as a sense of normality returned to the city. ISAF has since maintained a discreet presence.

(5) The anniversaries of the death of Ahmed Shah Masood, the Northern Alliance leader, on 9 September, and of the terrorist attacks of 11 September passed without any incident.

(6) A further explosion, caused by explosive materials, took place on 28 September near the offices of the Afghan Military Intelligence Agency, slightly wounding four people.

(7) The explosions in the city, while serving as a reminder of the residual terrorist threat, have had little impact on the flourishing commercial and social life in the city. Ordinary citizens, tired of violence and factional politics are endeavouring instead to normalize their lives and to improve their standards of living.

(8) ISAF will maintain a vigilant stance in the period leading up to 7 October, which will see the introduction of a new national currency and coincide with the first anniversary of the start of the bombing campaign in Afghanistan.

c. Assistance projects towards the local community

ISAF continued to run an extensive CIMIC (Civil-Military Cooperation) program in the reporting period in order to provide assistance to the local community. This assistance is channeled through carefully selected quick-impact projects on the basis of local requirements and humanitarian considerations, respect for cultural and religious values and the principle of equi-distance to all the ethnic groups making up the people of Afghanistan. Assistance efforts focus on the field of education and public health and include the renovation of educational and health establishments (schools, kindergartens, orphanages and clinics), supply of teaching materials, provision of equipment and engineering expertise to help with the water supply and sanitation, provision of fire-fighting training and equipment, air traffic control and meteorological training, assistance with the water, electricity, library and reproduction facilities of the two universities in Kabul and supply of medical aid and distribution of baby food. The renovation and refurbishment of the Yakatoot High School and the restoration of the historical "Shahe Du Shamshera" mosque are particular examples of ISAF's CIMIC work.

As the local community continues to convey numerous requests for assistance, ISAF endeavours to utilize its own limited resources to the full and seeks financial support from other sources. To date, 130 projects have been completed by ISAF, 55 current projects are underway and a further another 70 projects are being staffed and planned. Most of these projects are funded from the national sources of the ISAF Contributing Countries, while the EU provides some funds for the efforts to improve the water supply in Kabul. Contributions by Member States to the trust fund established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1386 (2001) would help finance ISAF's joint expenses including assistance projects.

3. SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

The following specific issues, falling outside of ISAF's core mission, continue to have implications for security and stability in Kabul.

a. Progress on the establishment and training of an Afghan national army has been slow. The Afghan authorities have prepared a detailed conceptual document setting out certain parameters for defence reform. However, the overall institutional structure and command and control arrangements of the new national army should be determined as a matter of priority. Otherwise, it may not be possible to assign meaningful tasks to the individual battalions trained. The U.S. has recently completed the training of the 3rd Battalion of the Afghan National Army and Turkey is providing advanced training to the 1st Battalion of the Afghan National Guard.

b. The flow of actual international aid is still limited, in contrast to repeated appeals by the Afghan authorities and the pledges made at the Tokyo Conference. The lack of adequate financial assistance continues to hamper the efforts of the Afghan government to form effective central governmental institutions and to extend them to the entire country. Most police and army personnel and public employees have not been paid for many months and there is considerable concern that this might strengthen criminal tendencies. The lack of resources continues to hamper efforts to restrict the poppy cultivation and the narcotics trade.

c. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 1.7 million people are estimated to have returned to the country since March, mostly from Pakistan. Approximately, 600,000 returnees have settled in Kabul so far, taking advantage of the relative stability of the city. However, the presence of such a large number of refugees continues to have a negative impact upon the security circumstances in Kabul. ISAF is consulting the UNHCR officials for the provision of security for the winterization programme designed to assist the returnees to cope with the approaching winter conditions.

4. CONCLUSION

During the report period, ISAF continued to provide substantial assistance to the Afghan authorities in maintaining security and stability in Kabul and its surrounding areas. Despite the deplorable acts of terrorism witnessed in Kabul and the potential vulnerability of the security circumstances, the situation in the city is calm and stable. ISAF has stepped its presence through additional patrolling and check-points activities. ISAF has also endeavoured to remedy certain shortfalls in the security system, in cooperation with the Afghan authorities. However, substantial international assistance should be mobilized without further delay in order to tackle effectively the residual terrorist threat, the extremist ideologies and the underlying causes of conflict.